

JACEK WOJCIECHOWSKI
e-mail: jwck@wp.pl

THREATS TO LIBRARIES



Jacek Wojciechowski, prof. dr hab. (emeritus), is former director of the Provincial Public Library in Kraków and former head of the Department of the Library at the Jagiellonian University. He deals with issues of librarianship, reading, psychology of communication and sociology of literature. His achievements include over 1,100 publications (about 600 of these scientific), including 16 scientific monographs. He reviews the current Polish and foreign scientific literature in the quarterlies *Przeгляд Biblioteczny* and *Knížnica* (in Slovak), and in the *Library Annual*.

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ABSTRACT: Thesis/Purpose of the article – The present multitude of forms of communication requires diversified intermediation and promotion, and these seem now to be now the main functions of libraries. However, the basis of these endeavours is still print. A departure from supporting print media would result in a crisis in librarianship. In mediation there is a need to verify the content and support a critical reception, as well informational as non-informational. Direct services are essential, but so are remote services and the facilitation of interpersonal contacts. **Research method** – an analysis of the literature allows us to conclude that the overall library offer requires the supply of print media, delivery of digital media, and also the creation of conditions for direct contact between users. Without that, there will be no future for librarianship. **Results and conclusions** – The advantages of print are: wisdom, reflective concentration, non-informative (fictionalized) freedom. The possible elimination of print is therefore a serious intellectual and emotional threat. The advantages of digital communication are: multi-semioticity, informational; richness and extensive range – while its weaknesses are overinformation, shallow knowledge, and passivity of inspired thinking. Furthermore the related co-presence of smart-

phone users is only an appearance. Therefore, there is a need for the coexistence of print and digital communication and the facilitation of direct contacts between users. Libraries provide all of this in their offer. In turn, any departure from this, even partial, threatens librarianship with a fundamental crisis.

The advantages of print are: reflective concentration, wisdom. The elimination of print is thus a serious threat.

The advantages of digital communication are: extensive range and multi-semiotic nature. Its weaknesses – overinformation, shallow knowledge, and passive thinking. Moreover the co-presence; that is made possible by smartphones; is only an illusion. Therefore, there is a need for the coexistence of print and digital communication, as well as the facilitation of direct contact between users. Libraries provide all of this in their offer.

In the long history of librarianship there have been favourable periods, but there have also been more calamitous ones, when libraries were destroyed with no new one being built in their place. Nevertheless, there has been a timeless preservation of the very model of the library in the general consciousness, with its collecting of books, its task of disseminating knowledge, and its promotion of creative thinking. And in this spirit, when times of devastation have passed, library initiatives have been reborn and developed over time. Because, objectively speaking, they were needed.

The contemporary situation, however, is no longer a repetition of this state of affairs, and there can be only a partial continuation. The need for changes are significant and at the same time appropriate to the requirements of the time. They are more pressing than ever; because social communication has never before been so extensive and varied. All innovations in this area have taken place mainly in the last half-century. So it seems now that the library's intermediation in communication should cover numerous possible variants of communication – but without cancelling the existing forms. Rather promoting each one, precisely according to its characteristic features and executive possibilities. Libraries should be prepared for this.

Meanwhile, following the extensive literature on this subject from many countries, I do not see a properly balanced tone or a tendency to regard the preservation of communicative diversity in libraries as a necessary achievement. In pursuit of alleged modernity, some conceptualizers turn only to media communication, and therefore to entirely technical communication. Others, on the other hand, see only old forms of communication. So all of this together does not look productive.

If in the future libraries are to be useful on their own – and this is a condition for their continued existence – they must switch to multi-communication mediation. Not by replacing some forms with others, but by enri-

ching their repertoire and adapting to the tasks they can fulfil according to their characteristics. And that requires some fundamental reflection.

IN THE WORLD OF MULTICOMMUNICATION

Libraries were established a long time ago so that the book or book-like products, produced with considerable difficulty, could serve a larger number of readers. And this was the first important contribution of librarianship to the development of social mentality. With time, a lot has changed, but the belief that libraries invariably have communication tasks to fulfil is still valid (Aleshin, 2018, p. 123).

However, many current opinion makers try to convince us and our sponsors that the book and print in general; are no longer such significant communication tools as to be more effective than others. So in total they diminish their importance. But the argument is highly perfunctory, superficial and does not penetrate to the very essence of communication.

At this point, it is worth adding that numerous conceptualizers – not only in Poland – have groundlessly agreed to identify communication essentially solely with information, or if you prefer: information from as total communication (Kulczycki, 2012, p. 30). This is a fundamental mistake. The non-informative part of communication is as important as the informational (Kulczycki, 2012, p. 37). Therefore, it cannot be marginalized or regarded as of little use. However, this is what has happened at least in the sphere of many recent library and bibliological concepts. This is because, not only in Poland, IT specialists have been in the lead in academic librarians' training centres. And from this follows one of the major dangers facing librarianship today, namely over-information. I would not argue that it is the only one.

While emphasizing the remarkable value of printed literature as such, I would like to point out, however, the innovations in communication that were certainly not overlooked by librarians working intensively; these are, after all, the results of their initiatives. For some time libraries have abandoned – I would not say relinquished – the exclusive use of books and other written materials as their tools by undertaking parallel mediation efforts in many other, very different forms of public communication. Also in media and in direct forms. All with a deep conviction that each communication variant has a different effect and serves different purposes, and therefore cannot be replaced by others. Attempts at such a substitution are as risky as taking a tight corner at high speed: it is easier to spoil everything than to achieve anything.

Communication consists in transmitting the form and content of an Utterance as well as constructing relations in such a way that the recipient

accepts the content and interprets it for his own use (Cave, 2016, p. 110; Kulczycki, 2012, p. 27). One variant of communication alone is therefore not enough for this purpose. Naturally, all communication is based on interaction through signals, symbols, and abstracts, representing certain meanings (Chandler, Munday, 2011, pp. 59, 389, 415). But no one has agreed in advance; that it has to be a remote interaction, nor that it has to be either through media or in writing. It all depends on the participants, their attitudes, conditions, and the goal set for each communication project. If you cannot recall it, it is difficult to rely on positive effects from communication.

All the more so as the circumstances we are now entering; are much more diversified in terms of communication, than they have ever been before. Libraries must switch to multi-media, multi-semiotic intermediation – but not to the detriment of print (because it serves a different purpose and does so differently) – as well as to facilitating direct inter-user contacts, not only indirect ones. According to some experts, we should not stop at merely arranging projects, but we must prepare the audience for participation in various forms of communication (Asselin, Doiron, 2013, pp. 6, 122). Otherwise, the future for libraries may be uncertain, or even nullified.

The situation of public communication becomes complicated not only due to the multiplication and diversification of its forms, but also as a result of a widespread loss of trust in the sources of content broadcasting. Print is losing its high prestige, but there are also signs, that over 80% of the audience do not trust the media (Botsmanova, 2018, p. 15; Travniček, 2017, p. 380). This means, that content can be difficult to get across into public circulation.

Even in direct contacts, communication is sometimes difficult. People most trust broadcasters, whom they consider to be like themselves (Botsmanova, 2018, p. 62; Travniček, 2017, p. 142). This, in turn, suggests the need for friendly intermediation, and it seems that libraries could play such role – assuming a multivariance in media and mediation.

But there is also another circumstance that prompts this. Namely, widespread and increased distrust towards sources of public communication, does not always inspire caution. It happens that messages generated mechanically, even by communication robots, are accepted unreservedly: they do not raise any doubts, do not provoke reflection. This is a dangerous situation (Botsmanova, 2018, pp. 142, 230). After all, not full content, disseminated on the web, is truly productive and reliable. The automatic nature of generating the content has nothing to do with it.

Theoretically, libraries could take care of authenticating the content transmitted, building on this a conception of their future. But it would require the creation of an appropriate verification system – created from scratch, because there is no such thing yet.

The library's verification capability does not seem overlarge these days, but that doesn't mean that it doesn't exist at all. It should be looked for especially in the activation of recipient behaviours and in encouraging recipients to create their own, individual contexts; when receiving the transmitted content. These contexts can be largely similar or common, but not completely or fully (Cappelen & Dever, 2016, pp. 8, 159, 184). They differ more or less in details, and therefore the ways of interpreting the content are also different. And it must continue to be so.

Libraries can contribute to this by persuading people to be intellectually active, and more specifically to receive content critically (Brozo, 2019, pp. 166, 206). Sometimes they do take on this role, nowadays. And in the future, they should do so all the more.

Intensifying this task, treating it as our main duty, may, over time, meet with the acceptance and recognition of our audience in current practice, offering new social benefits from library activities. Although I'm not saying it will be easy.

For the problem is also precisely that the public now has at their disposal a wide variety of forms of communication – more numerous and more varied than ever before. They are often dissimilar to each other and function differently, but these differences are not fully realized, clearly enough, or broadly enough. Therefore, there is no place for them in accordance with the nature of a specific form of communication. On the contrary: there is convergence, i.e. mixing and combining various media in random ways (Gmiterek, 2012, p. 24; Maryl, 2015, *Życie* p. 14); and remediation, i.e. accidental replacement of one semiotic form with another, without thinking or caring whether they are suitable or not (Maryl, 2015, *Życie* p. 299; Sikora, 2007, p. 185).

Moreover, this functional multi-media communication and the simultaneous multi-tasking of the same means of communication definitely hinder the perceived focus, content, thus reducing the quality of its transmission (Francuz, Pisarek, 2015, p. 120). There is a general infantilization of communication processes, with excessive and at the same time multifarious dependence on the network (Godzic, Rudzińska, Kowalewska, 2015, pp. 36, 76), which now also interferes in circumstances in which it previously did not participate (Maryl, 2015, *Życie*, p. 302). It only seemingly looks like enrichment and progress. In fact, it is rather a step backwards, as it subordinates all communication to a network variant, in a simplified, digital version.

But it is what it is. Not only the coexistence, but also the mixing of traditional and new media; that looks to be irreversible. The question then arises whether they will all survive. Some are of the opinion, that only the most effective ones will (Kubica, 2016, p. 39). But which ones? For in any case there is no appropriate guarantee.

It seems that communicative variety, the richness of forms – where each is assigned the tasks for which it is most suited – are to be the priority pursuits in communicative practice. Libraries could contribute to this, especially by appropriately adjusting their intermediary behaviour, and thereby differentiating, and they could also base their further existence on this. On the other hand, standardizing communication, reducing the richness of the repertoire and forms, does not indicate any communicative effectiveness. Nor does it create a successful existential premise for the future of librarianship. On the contrary: it threatens it with disappearance.

This is therefore; a problem that at the moment requires special consideration. Especially in the context of pandemic-induced remote library services; which are nonetheless temporary, or at least ultimately unworkable, due to exclusive rights issues. Under normal conditions, the library offer via the Internet – which has recently discovered various advantages and can by no means be the main offer of library services – if only because the majority of users will still prefer to read printed books, which are therefore available in the direct editorial sense (Travniček, 2017, p. 293). At the same time, the library's internet service, as it has turned out, may be much richer than previously thought. But this is by virtue of being a complementary, additional tool, not a substitute. It should work together, multilingually, and in multiple forms of broadcast.

Therefore, there is a need to maintain and implement services and programs in a direct mode, on site and for the home, using contacts between users, as well as between the public and librarians. This is the specificity of libraries! And the more such relationships occur, the many more times content is transmitted, and therefore, as a result, the richer is the public communication mediated by libraries (Whitworth, Ahmed, 2013, p. 150). In this way, the role of the library as a link in communication is radically intensified; and the monopoly of networks in this respect then weakens.

What is more, perhaps in turn the social concretization of the library becomes active as a centre for arranging interpersonal contacts, which in the modern world, in open practice, are being reduced. At least in direct forms. And with their reduction, the need for a library service repertoire is also reduced. This can and must be prevented.

The functioning of digital network communication on a global scale is already an obvious fact. Just as obvious too is the functioning of written communication – with its mainly printed variants – on a universal scale, and of many other versions of media communication, and further still of direct (verbal) communication. There is no doubt that these are all different from each other and will probably still undergo changes that will further intensify these differences, heading, as it would seem, towards a narrow specialization of application, and thus towards coexistence side by side. Although it is difficult at the moment to completely rule out the

opposite solution, which would consist in the mutual elimination of some forms, or indeed in a convergent merging into one or several common formulas. But I see this as a negative act.

At this point, the fluidity and unstructured nature of network communication are noticeable (Zubkov, 2018, p. 319). Thus, this is a formula of agreement completely different from any previously known. It allows for a specific, different method of content transmission (Landow, 2006, p. 109), but there is no indication that it is any deeper than those known so far. Although opinions have been voiced that the youngest generations of recipients of communication messages are now different from previous ones, transmedia-savvy and adapted to the new circumstances of reception (Travniček, 2017, p. 379), there is no explanation as to what this difference would be. There is not even any evidence that this is true.

Very general characteristics of particular types of communication prevail, without a full investigation into their essence, as well as their benefits and shortcomings. But most of all, there is no psychomental description of the reception processes. It seems we don't know enough about it at the moment.

Opinions expressed are groundless, one-sided and, above all, emphasize the current widespread dependence of the audience on the network transmission of content (Godzic, Rudzińska, Kowalewska, 2015, p. 76). This is accompanied by the tacit assumption; that not only will this dependence continue, but the Internet, along with other media, will change the nature of public circulation of content even more – into sound and image. This means that global communication will become predominantly electronic. Online and offline blend into onlife (Fazik & Hrdinaková, 2019, p. 3; Floridi, 2014, pp. 12, 43).

The main concern is that at first; digital hypertext will function alongside print for some time, but then will eliminate it (Landow, 2006, p. 361). There is fear, because it is tacitly assumed, that the intellectual and cognitive potential of digital communication is lower than that of print communication. Therefore, the forecast is not good. Nor is it developmental. Not unless we manage to undermine it conceptually, or oppose it in practice – for which, however, there are no indications.

Nonetheless, future productive ideas are also formulated in this respect. Most generally, it comes down to the functional connection of the existence of digital and print materials (Zubkov 2018, p. 320). Thus, writing and reading would be digitally complemented in those content areas, that would be most suitable for this. Or vice versa: writing and reading will deepen the content, initially communicated via the Internet and in multi-media mode. As far as I can tell, such a solution would also mean the continuation of the functioning of the library.

DIGITALIA

Thus, the basic dilemma for libraries stems from ignorance of the position of digital communication in public practice: whether it is to be one of many forms – even the dominant one, but still within conditions of co-existence – or ultimately the only one. With the second option, it is impossible to create favourable prospects for the future of libraries, even in the short term. Because this means a radical reduction in reading and readership on a mass scale, and the disappearance of the demand for facilitation of direct contacts (Gorman, 2015, p. 16; Jacher, 2007, pp. 19, 21). Thus the end of that upon which librarianship is mainly based. So what, how, and why should libraries intermediate from now on?

This, in rational parameters, cannot be specified at the present. There are only suggestions; that future public communications will be mostly electronic (Floridi, 2014, p. 12) (but what does that mean, *mostly?*), and this is basically a guessing game. It is supported by the global observation that currently younger generations, in terms of communication, definitely prefer the Internet, which is already (or only?) used by 1/3 of the world's population (Fazik, Hrdinakova, Majdan, 2020, p. 3; Franklin, 2013, p. 14; Sheikh, Mills, 2012, p. 163; Serova, 2016, p. 65; Travniček, 2017, pp. 137, 379).

At the same time, however, to these reports are added the opinions that these preferences result from attitudes towards pleasure, comfort, and low mental effort generally (Sheldon, Rauschnabel, Honeycutt, 2019, pp. 9, 13; Serova, 2016, pp. 64, 67). What is worse, there are already credible conclusions, that the replacement of print and reading with digital communication has a destructive effect on both the structures of the mind and the course of thinking processes (Carr, 2010, pp. 184, 187; Wolfova, 2020, pp. 14, 20).

Therefore, the future picture of public communication requires consideration, and in connection with it a prognosis for the next few years for librarianship. With our limited knowledge, this can only be done by analysing the features of the new digital communication – at least the recognised ones – in the context of their dominant applicability or dysfunctionality.

First of all, what is noticeable, is the high convenience of digital communication. No other current form of public communication is able to facilitate the transmission of one's own content to everyone, i.e. the exchange of content generally, to an equally extensive degree, thereby making life much easier (Glassman, 2016, p. 31; Maryl, 2015, *Życie*, p. 347; Reed, 2014, p. 43; Sheldon, Rauschnabel, Honeycutt, 2019, p. 164). From this point of view, the attractiveness and usefulness of this tool is indisputable.

However, what needs to be clarified, is to what end this serves. Also we need to add, that the criterion of attractiveness is not always important and fully acceptable.

Thus on the one hand, this form creates extensive, multi-semiotic and multi-path possibilities of content referencing, through mixed or combined verbal-written and visual-image transmissions, and also through its wide range, because such is the nature of the network (Bradshaw, 2018, p. 211; Landow, 2006, p. 2). On the other hand, however, there are plenty of distortions and deficiencies in this, not to mention the inability to fully protect intellectual property (Bradshaw, 2018, p. 93; Glassman, 2016, p. 205).

Among the most insightful observers of the Internet, there is a widespread and perhaps even dominant opinion (on a global scale), that the content transmitted in this way is mostly superficial, of the simplest kind, and focused on an immediate and unreflective reception, therefore it does not encourage any intellectual analysis (Baron, 2015, p. 222; Batorowska, 2013, p. 107; Francuz, Pisarek, 2015, pp. 161-162, 170; Serova, 2016, pp. 64, 66; Wolf, Barzillai, 2009, pp. 32, 34; Wolfova, 2020, p. 20). It is, or is meant to be, mainly functional, handy, and/or recreational, which is why the influence of the Internet on thinking is so often assessed as being destructive (Baron, 2015, p. 222; Francuz, Pisarek, 2015, p. 160, 164; Godzic, Rudzińska, Kowalewska, 2015, p. 63; Serova, 2016, p. 64; Wolfova, 2020, p. 20).

This happens for a number of reasons. One of them is the multi-semiotic nature of the Internet language. In other words, its structure, and not only the multimedia composition itself, but also the manner of its composition, unique in other communications. It is therefore more than just another new multimedia and hypertext content transmission tool. It does, nevertheless, consist of elements already known, namely, images that have been animated, speech, sounds, and writing all tied together. But precisely: in a mode of exclusivity, as the only one (Adamic, 2004, p. 34; Landow, 2006, pp. 6-7; Sikora, 2007, p. 289).

Therefore, this semiotics is not fully suited to the same or unique circumstances to; which the individual components fit separately, on their own. On the other hand, it can be useful in conditions, when other forms of communication are of little help or even dysfunctional.

The reception of Internet communications, based on a hypertext, multi-path network of signals to choose among, is different, unique – not even like that of other media variants (Fazik, Hrdinaková, Majdan, 2020, p. 3; Jack, 2019, p. 115; Kerr, 2008, p. 102; Landow, 2006, pp. 2-3). Such signals activate various neurons in the mind, but usually without reflective expansion, thus they do so differently than when reading (Wolfova, 2020, pp. 15, 29, 61). And in general, all the partial similarities of electronic communication to existing forms of communication are not able to radically erase the technological stigma of Internet content transmission, which is also important (Floridi, 2014, pp. 29, 219).

Such an aspect of digital communication gives the impression, that for the function of content transmission it is suitable for everything (Adamic,

2004, p. 34; Devine, Egger-Sider, 2014, p. 182). The impression! But this doesn't mean it really is so.

After a deeper analysis, the opinion arises that the Internet is mainly about communication, wide-ranging and multi-directional content exchange; and that sometimes it is also about an instantaneous connection, that is, in the relationship between man and device (Adamiec, 2004, p. 123; Gmiterek, 2012, p. 42; Nichols, 2017, p. 119; Sheldon, Rauschnabel, Honeycutt, 2019, p. 164). But this does not apply with equally effect to all communication processes. Contrary to numerous suggestions, it is not even always an effective tool for the transmission of information, because there is no protection against the transmission of pseudo knowledge (Aleshin, 2018, p. 123; Nichols, 2017, p. 6).

Yes, the Internet is undoubtedly (but let me add: also, so not only) an information tool, and perhaps Jadwiga Woźniak-Kasperek is right in saying; that at least some information services must be networked (Godzic, Rudzińska, Kowalewska, 2015, p. 63; Woźniak-Kasperek, 2011, p. 125). This, however, does not justify the exclusive and all-embracing, pan-informational ascription of information to the Internet by information science (almost all the achievements of which would be recalled here). After all, promoting such a concept would be disintellectualization.

In fact, it is an informational tool, that is not only useful, but also equally or even more dangerous, because it is not verifiable and it is embedded in the form of a popular medium. On the other hand, it contributes drastically to information overload, due to the excess of distributed notifications, transmitted continually moreover, in a continuous mode (Glassman, 2016, p. 73; Gmiterek, 2012, p. 22; Krzysztofek, 2014, p. 35; Nichols, 2017, p. 6; Wolfova, 2020, pp. 23, 83-84). And not all of this content is information.

Furthermore with such a degree of transmissive intensity, a full examination of the content distributed and possibly received; appears to be unlikely. So this is a superficial, uncritical reception that holds a vestige in the working memory for a short time. Without in-depth reading and rethinking of the new content, one cannot expand the boundaries of one's knowledge that is already mastered – neither in the longer term nor for more than 5 minutes, as suggested by George Miller (Wolfova, 2020, pp. 67, 84, 92). Thus, such a reception does not bring much informational use, apart from direct and temporally useful reports. In fact, it reduces one to listening to other people's statements (Nichols, 2017, p. 128).

Not only that: there is a different mode of remembering the transmitted content – if the effect of this method of reception can actually be called memorization. Namely, it is not the content of the recognized information – the sign or sequence (what) – that is fixed. But the location (where) of this content in the network (Brozo, 2019, p. 161), and possibly the recall method. This in turn means the reduction of one's own content and thoughts,

which are taken over and processed, i.e. assimilated. To put it bluntly: this is a hollowing out of the state of social knowledge. Can no one see this?

In the registry of the basic uses of the Internet, one of the leading positions is held by interactivity, but it is in a special mode, in dialogue mode so to speak. All network relations consist of verbal-written, as well as visual and sound contact; in the form of formulating and/or receiving (with possible replication) messages. These are mostly condensed, clip-like, shortened, so in all respects poorer in terms of content than the written or directly verbal ones (Deberdjaeva, 2015, p. 169; Glassman, 2016, p. 312; Godzic, Rudzińska, Kowalewska, 2015, p. 81; Kerr, 2008, p. 102). And yet it is these; that supersede or significantly reduce the use of other forms of communication, due at least to portability and convenience, and to simplifying the facilities of manipulation, compensating (?) possibly for other shortcomings. People paying attention and listening to smartphones can be found everywhere, in all circumstances. As a result, almost all of them remain in long-term and continuous relationships with others, but superficially and not necessarily synchronously. It is a partial and diffuse co-presence, thus only apparent.

Such contacts previously occurred fragmentarily only via radio headphones, but now they are common: they focus attitudes and behaviours in a variant of shared instant relations (Maryl, 2015, *Życie*, p. 17; Nichols, 2017, p. 113). Apparent, artificial and shallow. When their domination is consolidated, the consequences look dangerous (Nichols, 2017, p. 113; Wolfova, 2020, pp. 117-119). It is in fact because of their illusory attractiveness, ease of use, and dissimulation that they replace other forms of contact and understanding.

The result is that communication in each of the other modes is reduced. Especially in print and in direct presence: verbally. The process of communication – and thus intellectual – impoverishment does not even require a comment. It is obvious.

On the other hand, in terms of context, it is worth mentioning that libraries have been specially established to arrange and implement communication processes in many forms, especially through print, but not exclusively, and to inspire direct contacts. And nobody has changed or eliminated this, because they have had no such possibilities or powers. This, among other things, is a basis for concern and care for the intellectual standards of society.

Apart from that, there is also one more important feature of digital communication, clearly negative, and thus requiring effective counteraction. It is associated with this form of communication as a whole, and not only with individual messages, but destructive to the quality of communication in general, and to the standards of mental processes, also on a social scale. Namely, it is the hypertextual non-linearity of the content of digital

messages, elegantly called mosaicity, but it is nothing more than a multi-threaded mess and multi-content chaos (Adamiec, 2004, p. 38; Glassman, 2016, 71; Jack, 2019, p. 115; Kerr, 2008, p. 102; Landow, 2006, pp. 2, 109; Wolfova, 2020, p. 125). It does not lead in itself to productive and orderly reception, because it imposes scattered and superficial mental processes during and after reception: this some call grasshopper thinking (Wolfova, 2020, p. 118).

The avalanche of semiotically diverse signals creates an intensely rich, but chaotic, multi-content mosaic, not internally coherent, therefore non-structural and therefore usable only temporarily (Adamiec, 2004, p. 38; Devine, Egger-Sider, 2014, p. 102; Gmiterek, 2012, p. 42; Kerr, 2008, p. 102; Nichols, 2017, p. 108; Rankov, 2013, p. 4; Wolf, Barzillai, 2009, pp. 32, 34-35; Wolfova, 2020, pp. 118, 125). This is because it is impossible to process - due to the lack of time and lack of probing - as well as to be remembered for a long time, while at the same time limiting the activity of the mind. And this presents the very real threat of a reduction in the quality (level) of thinking - in the general social dimension (Wolfova, 2020, pp. 67, 127, 131).

It is also because it contradicts the basic rule of hermeneutics, namely, the individualization of one's own view of the world, and the personal interpretation of the content of communication messages received in any form. If internet technology surpasses - meaning also that it will suppress - hermeneutic inclinations and reduce or completely exclude individual thoughts, then its destructive impact on the social mentality may turn out to be dramatic, because this is not how knowledge is created (Thomas, 2013, p. 49; Zimmermann, 2015, p. 131). And the symptoms of such a situation are already widely visible.

There are also attempts by various interest groups and influencers, especially of a commercial and even more so of a political nature, to take control of the network's flow of content. This has not yet been fully achieved, but it is partially the case, also in the form of hacking. Yet no one should have such a possibility. And although other variants of public communication are also not fully resistant to such compelling undertakings, the digital network is particularly susceptible to them, while print is the least (Franklin, 2013, pp. 195, 199; Krzysztofek, 2014, p. 33; Wolfova, 2020, p. 207). And as a result of such entanglement and of reducing the awareness of addressees, it turns out to be most negatively effective in this respect.

The characteristics of the Internet emphasize - usually with excessive intensity - various advantages, benefits, and profits. Which of course they do provide. However, numerous threats and dangers are kept hidden, signalled only by a handful of psychologists, specifically neuroscientists. But they stand no chance in an open argumentative confrontation with the aggressive promotion of the media and wealthy producers or distributors

of digital equipment and accessories. And this promotion has just gotten hold of social beliefs and behaviour.

For this reason, there is a dramatic need to reach the awareness of society at large with the suggestion of developing and promoting a multicomunicative coexistence of user and receiver attitudes. Namely, the parallel use of print-reading, media, and digital communication, without rejecting directly verbal communication (Brozo, 2019, p. 157; Wolfova, 2020, p. 144). And the involvement of libraries in encouraging and enabling this should be as meaningful as possible.

DISSIMILARITIES

One of the most important factors; distinguishing the processes of digital communication from print-reading communication, is the dynamic nature of the digital message, even when written text appears on the monitor. In print, written text is static: it is the reader who activates their perception and gives it an appropriate course. On the other hand, it is an uninterrupted stream of content that emerges from the network (Aleshin, 2018, p. 160; Carr, 2010, pp. 7, 103; Deberdjaeva, 2015, p. 170; Glassman, 2016, p. 71; Maryl, 2012, Pozorne, p. 155), much more intense than in other variants of media communication. This, of course, also dictates the appropriate nature of the reception processes. Which, therefore, must also be dynamic and fast (Diebierdajewa, 2015, p. 171).

This is also the consequence of manoeuvrability in digital communication, which is actually two-way – and not only theoretically so, as is the case with concepts of print relations. The genealogical, subcutaneous model of the process of electronic communication is therefore dialogue, discourse, and the transmitting and receiving nature of the relationship (Carr, 2010, p. 85; Fazik, Hrdinakova, 2019, p. 10; Maryl, 2012, *Pozorne*, p. 59; Maryl, 2015, *Życie*, pp. 59, 203; Travniček, 2019, p. 50). And this is its originality. No other form of indirect multi-semiotic communication is so responsive.

But it is not obvious. On the contrary: digital communication camouflages its otherness and conceals its artificiality. It does not reveal that it introduces mock-ups, substitutes for the transmitting and receiving environment, that it imitates the feeling of co-presence, which are anonymous after all, and sometimes pretends to follow the formula of a game, but is nevertheless not a game either (Wolfova, 2020, pp. 83, 88, 127; Zając, 2006, p. 168). The dynamics of relations, therefore, also have deceptive connections and justifications, which has a negative impact on mental processes.

It cannot be ruled out that it is this flaw of digital communication which imposes a dynamic mode on the reception processes (apart from

being overloaded with content) that reduces the receptive activity of human memory, which cannot keep up with and does not encompass all the disseminated messages. And this reduction applies not only to long-term memory – which requires a different way of transmitting and receiving content – but also to working memory, i.e. cache memory. All in all, there is a kind of sliding on the surface of messages, without penetrating their deeper meaning and excluding reflective analysis (Carr, 2010, pp. 184, 194; Wolfova, 2020, pp. 88, 127).

The semiotic nature of digital messages, that is, audio-visual ones, similar to media, but not the same, and completely different from print messages, also imposes a different, mainly pictorial, nature of reception – with the fundamental consequence that the recipient focuses on fragments, excerpts, and details (Fazik, Hrdinakova, 2019, p. 10; Fazik, Hrdinakova, Majdan, 2020, p. 11). Such a detailed (mainly) visual presentation has the following characteristic, that in reception it does not enforce activity. The content is passively accepted, away from reflection, consideration, conclusions, and often intentionally cutting itself off from critical and analytical deliberation (Bradshaw, 2018, p. 162; Francuz, Pisarek, 2015, p. 161; Wolfova, 2020, p. 205).

Like the language of media in general, digital language by its nature is also subject to a reduction in content capacity, preferring simple and possibly short forms of expression (Baron, 2015, p. 80; Glassman, 2016, p. 75). It means that this variant of communication is not oriented towards in-depth and expanded content.

All limitations, in connection with the dynamic nature of contacts, shorten the reception processes in time to a minimum, shredding the messages into crushed segments, and enforcing reception that is as fast as possible (Baron, 2015, p. 56; Deberdjaeva, 2015, pp. 169, 171; Glassman, 2016, p. 75). In these circumstances, the in-depth focus on the acquired content is greatly reduced, if possible at all (Baron, 2015, p. 181; Dill-Shackleford & Vinney, 2020, p. 113; Francuz, Pisarek, 2015, p. 170). And the consequence is – already signalled here – a shallow reference to the received messages: sliding only on their surface, only over the external layer (Baron, 2015, pp. 165, 173; Tałuć, Tomaszczyk, 2018, pp. 79, 89; Wolfova, 2020, p. 88).

The reception process described in this way falls into the categories of automation, i.e. passive acknowledgment, with reduced memory activity, even that of working memory (Botsmanowva, 2018, pp. 142, 230; Thomas, 2013, p. 96; Wolfova, 2020, p. 127, 205). And this brings a high risk of mental emptiness, an automation of reflexes in reactions and behaviour. Furthermore; there is no consequence in the form of critical mental analysis. At least in circumstances – frequent and especially new – when it is needed and useful.

The processing of the received content in digital communication is dif-

ferent than in print, due to a different, mainly visual explication, and as a result of the chaotic dispersion of the transmitted content, in addition to its smooth, uninterrupted transmission (Fazik, Hrdinaková, 2019, p. 13; Glassman, 2016, pp. 71, 166). This disturbs the sender's and receiver's traditional roles. Confusion ensues: one has to behave differently (Godzic, Rudzińska, Kowalewska, 2015, p. 46; Landow, 2006, p. 125; Maryl, 2012, *Pozorne*, p. 154; Maryl, 2015, *Życie*, p. 17).

But the differences are not over yet. As a result of such, a mode of receiving content (which I have already indicated), the activity of working memory decreases, and long-term memory – which requires the participation of special (specialized) genes – is basically completely disabled (Brozo, 2019, pp. 181, 187). For memory, as such, consists in picking up signals and placing their traces in the mind. Meanwhile, the signals taken over from the monitor do not fully reproduce the content – WHAT – but to a large extent they only suggest the addresses of the location of these signals in the network, i.e. WHERE (Brozo, 2019, pp. 161, 191). In essence, this is how the foundations of yet another memory are formed, namely external, i.e. artificial memory (Brozo, 2019, p. 181). Regarding which for the time being, we do not know in what proportion it relates to the whole area of natural human memory. But there is no doubt that it is a kind of introduction to the automation of mental processes. If something like this really were to happen.

Would it be a useful phenomenon? At present, it is not possible to make an appropriate evaluation: too little is known. In current situations, learned behaviours, based on automatic reactions, are sometimes necessary. At the same time, they are not always merely imitative, repetitive, and passive. Some observers point out that in virtual communities, where such reactions prevail, sometimes it is also possible to create new content, due to the diversity of participants' knowledge (Ren, 2020). But in general, social existence must be based on processing, remembering, and creating content, old and new – in conjunction. And for this, forms of communication are necessary that favour mental concentration and creative processing of possessed and recorded messages.

There is no doubt that print media has served this purpose well for a long time. Its adaptation to such a task and such an intentional attitude, precisely because it is rooted in tradition, additionally promotes practical effectiveness. The most important result is the possibility of reflective concentration, focusing on the read content, probing it and processing it mentally (Aleshin, 2018, p. 167; Jack, 2019, p. 20). And that's what intellectually advanced communication processes are all about, after all. However, there is also a repetitive obstacle, the standard liability of reading, namely a simple (if not permanent) lack of patience on the receiving side (Nichols, 2017, p. 128).

In the opposite context, it is emphasized that in digital communication, the reception of content from the monitor is accompanied by a fundamental limitation, and often even complete exclusion, of mental concentration (Carr, 2010, p. 119, 194; Francuz, Pisarek, 2015, p. 170; Tałuc, Tomaszczyk, 2018, p. 79; Tapscott, 2010, p. 194; Travnicek, 2019, p. 15). There are no reflections that would deepen and develop the meaning of the adopted content (Botsmanova, 2018, p. 142; Francuz, Pisarek, 2015, p. 161; Tałuc, Tomaszczyk, 2018, p. 79; Wolfova, 2020, p. 210). So it is a superficial, shallow reception, limited to details (Baron, 2015, pp. 165, 173; Thomas, 2013, pp. 16, 98; Wolfova, 2020, p. 84).

There is not only no deeper reflection, but also the complicity of subconsciousness and (usually) other sensations – apart from the mere taking over of external content signals (Nosal, 2009, p.115). This significantly minimizes cognitive processes and reduces learning outcomes (Tang, 2017, pp. 13, 51). In combination with the attempts to replace direct didactics with remote digital learning, this particular finding takes on a special meaning. Namely, it suggests bad consequences; application is allowed only in forced circumstances, or as a complement to media coverage and reading.

However, it is also necessary to add that the abandonment or reduction of reflection is a drawback not in every communication process of receiving content, and not in all of its reception phases. It is not always necessary, or it does not have to be activated in all variants and/or stages of acceptance. Unreflective or low-reflective reactions are sufficient, where and when the purpose of the reception procedure is to obtain quick information about the existence and location of the required content, possibly also its micro-detail, as well as a simple derivative of instruction. In general, no one is focused on analysing the content, when they are at the stage of searching for information about the possibilities of obtaining the content sought, and when they want to facilitate this acquisition. There are many such circumstances (Francuz, Pisarek, 2015, p. 150; Maryl, 2015, *Życie*, p. 347; Travnicek, 2019, pp. 18, 50).

This means that in the general mode of notification, digital communication fulfils and is even sometimes irreplaceable as a handy signalling system, and complements content obtained by other means (Aleshin, 2018, p. 167). Thus, it is an effective tool for finding and for timing information signals that have been found. And it serves to introduce – and complete too – content from other forms of communication, especially from print and from reading (Brozo, 2019, p. 157).

BALANCE

In connection with the perceived and traced expansion of digital communication, and with the ubiquity of visible to the naked eye, the view has been expressed both in common opinion and in the explanations of many experts; that a print media and readership crisis is growing on a global scale. Numerous, unequivocal statements also suggest, that in science the importance of monographs and print media in general has diminished radically; and it is also speculated that even reading books as such may turn out to be old-fashioned (Aleshin, 2018, p. 17; Alvesson, Gabriel, Paulsen, 2017, p. 137; McCain, Jukes, Crocket, 2010, p. 70). Reliable evidence for such views is usually, however, absent.

Usually, the main reason for the reduction in readership is seen in the coexistence of digital communication, with the far-reaching (although not exclusive) addendum, that it is at odds with print communication and therefore limits the reading of printed materials. According to these suggestions, there is a deep communicative antagonism between print and digital media (Deberdjaeva, 2015, p. 171; Gorman, 2015, p. 16; Maryl, 2015, *Antropologia*, p. 533; McCain, Jukes, and Crocket, 2010, p. 70; Wolfova, 2020, pp. 111, 126). Statements that there are no such conflicts, on the other hand, are very rare. However, they do sometimes appear (Travniček, 2019, p. 86).

The opinion is rarely held, that the reduction of possible negative consequences (if they really exist) of the coexistence of both these forms of communication largely remains in the hands of the audience, because everyone acts according to their own intentions (Muraszkiewicz, 2014, p. 15). Rather it lies within the purview of communication intermediaries and transmitters, and thus also of library institutions and librarians.

However, in order to get down to it, one must first establish, in which areas and functions these forms of communication are possibly in conflict with each other, and in which they can coexist in parallel, and also in which areas they can complement and support each other. This must be specified in detail, and then – based on this – an appropriate offer should be developed and the public should be persuaded to use it. It is not easy, but there is no other way to achieve overall progress and development. A reasonable balance of various forms and variants of communication, specialized according to the functions performed, should serve as a specific foundation, a basic premise, and an opinion-forming consensus.

Conclusions from observation, analysis, and research, clearly emphasize the reflective stimulation of recipients during and after the processes of reading printed texts. Therefore there is justification to direct society towards the intellectual aspects of reading (Brozo, 2019, p. 206; Landow, 2006, p. 29; Wolfova, 2020, p. 200), and its final results, which we call wisdom (Wolfova, 2020, p. 200). This is due to the physiology of mental pro-

cesses. Namely, when reading from printed media, the mind works differently, than when it receives content in a different form, and the main manifestation of this is mental activity. Therefore, it is absolutely necessary to use it.

There are additional indications as well, resulting from numerous suggestions that reading from print is particularly suited to long and very long messages (Tałuć, Tomaszczyk, 2018, p. 89; Travníček, 2019, p. 19). Moreover, there are also some; who are of the opinion; that the printed book turns out to be the best carrier and transmitter of literary texts (Lan-dow, 2006, p. 179). Well, this is how to put together a set of reliable hints, which may suggest to what end printed media is most suitable.

On the other hand, the reception of media messages, especially digital ones, is different and has a different character, because in this case the mind works in a changed mode (Carr, 2010, p. 121). Therefore, it is necessary to understand this process in detail up to completion (it has not reached this point yet), and on this basis formulate proposals for the use of digital media, promoting them to the fullest extent possible and necessary. What is particularly important here, is their use not instead of printed media, but simultaneously with it.

Although not everything is known about this, the range with which we must orient ourselves is considerable. First of all, attention is drawn to the basic difference, namely the domination of chaos in the digital communication offer, or at least the deficiency of logical aspects – subject scope and order (Wolf, Barzillai, 2009, p. 35). This definitely makes it difficult, and usually even impossible, to concentrate (Carr, 2010, p. 194). The perception of content is shallow, superficial, not directed towards creativity, but oriented towards the passive reception of signals (Dill-Shackleford, Vinney, 2020, p. 113). In addition, it is selective, due to the overload of memory with excessive content (Tałuć, Tomaszczyk, 2018, p. 79; Wolf, Barzillai, 2009, p. 32).

This is not always wrong and not in all circumstances. There are tasks and functions in which the use of digital communication, crafted in this way, constitutes the optimal formula and should be preferred. After all, this is what the distribution of basic, elementary, simple information signals is about (Travníček, 2019, p. 18). And this is how one should understand the specialization of this communication variant, which is easy to say, but very difficult to promote and implement. Another thing is that there is a widespread risk (but less so in print communication) that the excess of information disseminated in this mode, associated with the possibilities of intentional manipulation, may contribute to spreading untruths and to shaping false consciousness in society (Wasiuta, 2020, pp. 125, 130, 135, 146).

Moreover, observers associate the use of the Internet with a technocratic attitude, which also signals a kind of user specialization (Batorowska,

2013, p. 91), although for the time being it is difficult to say with certainty, whether this is right or not. Perhaps, however, there is justification for the specialized suggestion that digital messages do not work well for the transmission of fiction (Landow, 2005, p. 265). With such an incomplete image of Internet communication, it is worthwhile to signal, in turn, its specific, intertextual, or rather intersemiotic, communication possibilities (Landow, 2005, p. 55). There are no such possibilities in other variants of communication.

The preferences for the use of digital communication for primarily informational purposes, without in-depth discussion and mainly through short messages, are justified given this attitude and functioning of the mind (Carr, 2010, p. 121; Tałuc, Tomaszczyk, 2018, p. 79). It follows from observation that during the reception of content from Internet messages, only (or mainly) working memory is activated (and also overloaded), gathering for a short time undeveloped exchangeable signals – for one-time use and in a small amount (Cowan, 2012, pp. 111, 113; Ormrod, 2017, p. 56). Therefore, penetrating new, complex, and difficult issues, particularly when combined with reflective analysis, requires the use of a different variant of communication (Cowan, 2012, p. 119).

This is the natural rationale for the varied applicability of different forms of communication, dictated by the various structures of the brain and by the different functioning of the mind. It is what is sometimes called bilingualism, i.e. the ability to use different (or at least two) semiotic systems (Wolfova, 2020, p. 192). However, it is neither mutual replacement nor interchangeability.

Following upon descriptions of the invasive expansion of the Internet and the suggestion of digital mastery over all public communication (although there is no evidence for this), there is also a proliferation of opinions, in the form of scientific statements as well, about alleged threats to social mentality and awareness from mechanical devices, which are in this way called intelligent; more generally referred to as Artificial Intelligence (AI). The argument is that the media –but most of all the Internet – automate (thus dehumanize) mental processes in communication, thus reducing natural thinking in general and taking control of beliefs and behaviours themselves (Wolfova, 2020, p. 197). In fact, this is not so at all as long as there is communicative diversity. The reduction of the receptive reflection takes place only in some variants of communication, and not in all of them. In general, there is a divergent gap between the technical offer of communication and what people expect from it (Whitworth, Ahmed, 2013, p. 55).

Stories, that machines can think better than humans, are fairy tales (Smith, 2020, p. 3; Whitworth & Ahmed, 2013, pp. 177, 188). In light of what is known today, this is out of the question. As computers cannot

deliberate, draw conclusions, or decide, for they have no scale of values, and because they also have no emotions – after all, they use only numbers – according them higher mental abilities is unfounded and even dangerous (Smith, 2020, pp. 2-3). Therefore, one should not mythologize or demonize illusory threats. Proper behaviour consists of the optimal use of various forms of communication – which are after all, created by man – in accordance with their character, nature, and possibilities.

These are not identical. There are many reasons for the fact, that digital messages work best in transmitting simple, not too complex content of a concise and handy nature. Therefore, it is best if they are relatively short, or at least not very extensive (Aleshin, 2018, p. 167; Baron, 2015, pp. 80, 222). On the other hand, printed texts are better suited for developed reflections and in-depth analysis, and increased volume does not go against their nature (Aleshin, 2018, p. 167; Baron, 2015, pp. 19, 222; Wolf, Barzillai, 2009, p. 36). Thus, there are no contradictions between characteristics and potential applications, as long as there is no attempt to substitute any one of these forms with another.

In addition, it also seems that the specificity of digital communication renders it less attuned to the transmission of fictional messages, but more favourable to the dissemination of information. In these circumstances, therefore, some are of the opinion that literary fictional texts are better received from printed media (Landow, 2006, pp. 179, 265; Travníček, 2019, p. 18).

From all this, it can be theoretically concluded; that in the case of mutual coexistence, apart from the spontaneous, independent transmission of content that is mainly informational, digital communication is also suitable for introductions and supplements to content taken from the print media. On the other hand, the reception of printed texts, regardless of their autonomous functioning, may also serve to deepen the content; received from the network, and to compensate for the negative effects of interaction with the Internet, such as reducing reflection and empathy (Brozo, 2019, p. 157; Wolf, Barzillai, 2009, p. 36; Wolfova, 2020, p. 210).

But this is only a theoretical conclusion. Its practical implementation, especially on a global scale, does not seem to be a fully achievable task. The publics, in their conduct, are not guided by the suggestions of observers, especially if these are unknown to them.

For the time being, in practice it is clearly the replacement of print, i.e. its elimination from public communication; in favour of digital media, which is difficult for specialists to accept. This is even so in relation to poor readers – where it is sometimes suggested (Wolfova, 2020, p. 187) – and even more so as a general occurrence.

The rational conclusion resulting from these analyses and observations, as well as from all circumstances, suggests the need to maintain a balance.

Between various forms of communication. First of all, between the two, that are currently (and in my opinion nonsensically) declared to be in competition, namely print and digital (Batorowska, 2020, p. 31; Bawden, Robinson, 2012, p. 332; Brozo, 2029, p. 157; Bushuev, 2014, p. 111; Kwanya, Stillwell, Underwood, 2015, p. 18; Wolfova, 2020, p. 176). There is no justification: indeed it is harmful, to promote either at the expense of the other; and to argue for interchangeable use. Not to mention to attempt; to reduce all public communication to only one version, namely digital. The optimal solution is to use each of them for what they are best suited for.

But this is (again) a purely theoretical formulation, extremely difficult to implement in practice. Especially in a society; where the vast majority of pedestrians move about with their eyes welded to their smartphones.

It sounds terrible, but the truth is that it is necessary to create – almost from scratch – an elementary and universal consciousness regarding, what each variant of communication is best suited for, or moderately so, or as a last resort, or not at all. And to prepare these for productive use, in accordance with their relevant specialization (Asselin, Doiron, 2013, p. 2; Batorowska, 2020, p. 19; Wolf, Barzillai, 2009, p. 39; Wolfova, 2020, p. 41).

There are some; who are of the opinion that the very differentiation of use, as long as it is intensive (and, moreover, intentionally implemented) with time contributes to the correct perception of different semiotic forms. This is because, in consequence, new neurons and synaptic connections develop in the brain, and thus a bilingual structural configuration of the mind is formed there (Wolfova, 2020, p. 192). But of course all of this is neither that simple; nor that easy to implement. However, appropriate initiatives and shaping measures are absolutely necessary. Especially in the implementation by institutions such as schools, universities, mass media centres, and... libraries.

LIBRARIES?

The role of libraries in communication mediation and adoption, so in content transmission too, is important – especially as long as they do not restrict access or charge fees. However, it cannot be said that it is the most important thing. Various reports, provided by libraries, suggest that library services reach the majority of the population, but there is no indication that this is true everywhere. Therefore, library undertakings, necessarily rational, should also be prudently correlated with the activities of other institutions, centres, and environments, which also take part in communication mediation and training. Indeed, independently undertaken initiatives have little chance of success.

The basic recommendation is that a library's intermediary offer absolutely must be multi-communicative (Kwanya, Stillwell, Underwood, 2015,

pp. 18, 36, 45; Wolfova, 2020, p. 176; Zubkov, 2018, p. 320). Libraries are service institutions, so their main task is to participate in the transmission of content. On the other hand, attempts by them to impose forms of communication – something possibly predominant in school teaching – do not have to be accepted by the public. Yes, libraries can suggest preferences for this or that semiotic variant, recommend choices according to the circumstances and tasks, but this is something completely different.

Under these conditions, the library's task is also to prepare users to utilize various types of communication (Asselin, Doiron, 2013, pp. 6, 122), with a possible indication of what is best suited for what. But it is also primarily advice, not a command, nor the enforcing of behaviour, because no library has the appropriate power of inducement for such enforcement. This becomes stronger only when other opinion-forming sources promote the same or similar communication attitudes and behaviours. And vice versa.

Balance in the implementation of the library consists in maintaining reasonable proportions between mediation in the transmission of information, mainly (but not only) with the use of the Internet, and the dissemination of other content – especially literature and the promotion, above all, of print media. Moreover, the facilitation of direct contacts with and among users is also something not to be marginalized.

Information communication, currently in a stage of explosion, requires special search and transmission intermediation, smart sorting, and verification, as well as practical training for users (Stepanov, 2012, p. 251; Wilson, Kellerman, Corey, 2013, p. 192). Libraries are institutions, that are especially suited to this by their very nature. It is not true, however, that they have always successfully dealt with these obligations, and that they have proven themselves under all circumstances. These projects still require significant improvement, a raising of standards, and adjusting to the needs of the audience and the current circumstances.

In terms of these obligations, but mainly at the basic level, i.e. in the field of quick messaging, the Internet is currently the best solution. In contrast, in complex information tasks, informative print media can also be of great use, and sometimes are the only solution. All the more, so as the messages get more complicated – also with the task of verification and elimination of adulterations. This important bi-semiotic connection now needs to be recalled and refreshed in a library-based implementation. At the moment, it is completely invisible.

In addition, this library offer also begins to develop a bit into fossilized features, as it does not change over time. First of all, it too rarely takes into account the degree of ownership of computers and smartphone by the public, formerly limited, but now more and more abundant. As a result, a significant section of users are now focused on using library materials

(provided by libraries), but not their devices. On the other hand, there is still an accompanying factor, namely that it is free of charge.

The current situation and configuration of public communication does not however mean that it will continue as it is. There is no guarantee that the semiotic systems we know and currently use, will not be complemented by others in the future, and that they will not change their structures or functions, or that there will be no selective elimination. Libraries therefore need to follow this closely.

For now, an important duty of libraries, perhaps even the most important one, is their active (aggressive? leading?) participation in promoting the use of print communication. Not only for the purpose of extensive and in-depth information, but especially for the dissemination of non-informational and non-informative content. First of all, libraries must support the circulation of literary texts (Asselin, Doiron, 2013, pp. 6, 122; Kwanya, Stillwell, Underwood, 2015, pp. 18, 36). And this is absolutely necessary in their printed versions, because the digital ones – as I have already mentioned many times – are not equivalent. In general, the whole huge range of intellectual communication requires the use of printed carriers. This is what libraries should definitely promote.

However, they only do so occasionally. The entire professional and scientific (?) library-related literature – not only in Poland – together with its concepts, has been infected by the fascination with digital communication and focuses professional reflections mainly on it; by suggesting that this is a form of communication that is truly and exclusively modern, and praising the library's remote offer beyond all measure.

Indeed, this is inevitable in the conditions of an intensified pandemic. On the other hand, promoting it as optimal in more or less normal and stable circumstances – with incredible emphasis, and enumerating its alleged advantages, supremacy, and even uniqueness – is a dramatic misunderstanding.

Probably it should be assumed that digital communication as a co-existing form will last for a long time, just like the library's offer of remote services, complementing direct services. Therefore, they must be accepted and implemented for their own use. But nothing more.

Other forms of communication (as well as different variants of library services) are still necessary precisely because they are different and diverse. They are better suited for some things, worse for others. Therefore, it must be assumed that they will also persist. Possibly for different tasks and specialized functions – if society can be induced to make use of these. This is also related to the prognosis for print media, and it is possible that it is also favourable.

Although G.P. Landow says that print may disappear one day (Landow, 2006, p. 361), for now this is a completely unfounded opinion, al-

though he is not the only one who, states it. But there are no strong arguments that this will or will not be the case.

If, however, print disappears, it must be brutally and unequivocally stated, that then there will be no place for libraries in the social space. Their main basis for functioning is intermediation in the transmission of print media – with additional intermediation in digital communication, and with the facilitation of direct contacts. So if electronic communication ends up being the only form, then with possible transformations and improvements, including technological ones, it will manage without libraries.

The final outcome is only partly dependent on the libraries themselves. However, the current, unreflective, and downright insane applause among libraries for (exclusively) digital communication is shocking. After all, this is an obvious form of conceptual (library science) and professional suicide.

Only a multi-communication balance, which is useful after all and necessary for the whole of society, is a formula for the prospective survival of libraries. It should therefore be promoted as far as possible, and feasible within the conditions of the library.

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